

DEC 20 1962

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

FOIAb3b

53 Million Supplies Being Stacked for Cuba Ransom

Washington, Dec. 20 (UPI) —

American Red Cross personnel working around the clock in a fifth floor conference room of their headquarters here, are collecting the 53 million dollars of supplies that Fidel Castro is asking for the release of the Bay of Pigs prisoners.

The Cuban premier's list, it was learned today, is about the size of a big city telephone directory. It contains 10,000 items of various quantities.

The Red Cross is playing a key role in the deal for the release of the 1,113 captured Cuban invaders. It has agreed to get the items on Castro's list, arrange their shipment to Florida, store them there, and eventually move them on to Cuba if the negotiations are successfully completed.

U. S. Part Not Clear

The United States government's part in the arrangements was not clear. But a source close to one group participating in the ransom program said its leaders were summoned to the justice department "to see what could be worked out." This source said the group wound up contributing several thousand dollars.

Ramone F. Eaton, a vice president of the Red Cross, said the United States government has not assisted in the organization's operation at all, although it has been "completely sympathetic."

He said the contributions now total more than 33 million. He disclosed that 139 companies

have contributed supplies, such as food or drugs.

James B. Donovan, New York attorney, is handling the negotiations with Castro in Havana.

The American Association of Railroads has donated 80 box cars to carry the supplies to Florida. A spokesman for the association said that freight charges on the cars exceed a quarter of a million dollars.

The maritime trades department of the AFL-CIO said today that the freighter African Pilot will sail from Miami Friday night or Saturday morning with the exchange goods. He said the maritime trades department had agreed to donate the labor needed to transport the goods to Havana, and estimated the monetary value for this at \$15,000.

Families Enlist Help

Eaton said his group was first approached last Dec. 5 by the Cuban families committee and asked to take part. Saturday, Dec. 8, the prisoners committee informed the Red Cross that the arrangements could not proceed unless the organization played a role.

An emergency office was set up in the fifth floor conference room and last Thursday Red Cross personnel went on an around-the-clock basis to fulfill the items listed in Castro's list.

The internal revenue service said today that United States firms who donate supplies for the agreement are eligible for tax deductions "under the regular tax law."